

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJECT: THANIN OUTLINES PLAN TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY TRAINING
SESSIONS

1. PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN OUTLINED PLANS GRADUALLY TO EXPAND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE THAI POLITICAL PROCESS IN A SPEECH BEFORE A MEETING OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS JULY 25. THANIN ANNOUNCED THE RTG WILL ESTABLISH PROVINCIAL CENTERS WHERE LOCAL LEADERS WILL ATTEND 12-WEEK "DEMOCRATIC TRAINING" SESSIONS. THE PROGRAM, REPORTEDLY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN LATE 1977, WILL INITIALLY PROVIDE TRAINING FOR MORE THAN 6,000 PERSONS RECRUITED FROM 500 DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO ESTABLISH TRAINING CENTERS MARKS THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRST PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPLEMENT THE FOUR-PHASE PLAN, EMBODIED IN THE CONSTITUTION OF OCTOBER, 1976, WHICH CALLS FOR A GRADUAL RETURN TO A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION, THE FIRST FOUR YEARS (1976-80) OF THE STEP-BY-STEP PLAN TO PERMIT MORE POPULAR REPRESENTA-
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TION IN THE GOVERNMENT IS A PERIOD WHEN "THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BE INTERESTED IN AND TO BE AWARE OF THEIR DUTIES." DURING PHASE TWO (1980-84) THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALLOW THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DURING THE THIRD PHASE (1984-88) THE POWERS OF THE HOUSE ARE TO BE INCREASED, AND DURING STAGE FOUR (AFTER 1988) REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IS

TO BE FULLY RESTORED.

3. THE SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC TRAINING COURSE OUTLINED BY THANIN IS DESIGNED TO TRAIN A CORE OF LEADERS WHO WILL, IN TURN, INFLUENCE AND TRAIN OTHERS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. THE COURSE WILL REPORTEDLY ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT, CREATE AN AWARENESS OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT AND URGE PARTICIPATION IN THE MAINTENANCE OF STABILITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY.

4. COMMENT: THANIN'S USE OF THE GOVERNORS' MEETING AS A FORUM TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM MAY BE AN EFFORT BY THE RTG TO EMPHASIZE TO PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES THE IMPORTANCE OF CENTRALIZED DIRECTION AND CONTROL OVER THE PROGRAM AND TO REDUCE THE RISK OF OVERZEALOUS REGIONAL OFFICIALS USING THE "DEMOCRATIC TRAINING" COURSES TO FURTHER THEIR OWN POLITICAL AIMS. THE 12-YEAR PROGRAM FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IS VERY LONG IN TERMS OF RECENT THAI EXPERIENCE, AND WHETHER IT IS FOLLOWED WILL DEPEND ON LARGE MEASURE ON HOW LONG THANIN REMAINS IN OFFICE AS PRIME MINISTER.

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